

THE BRETHREN'S EVANGELIST.

THE PRISONER'S AID SOCIETY.

BY E. L. YODER.

While in Philadelphia, through the courtesy of brother Henry C. Cassell, I was invited to a public meeting of the above named society, held in the — Presbyterian church, near the eastern Penitentiary. The society has been in existence for nearly a century, and its object is indicated by its name. The object of this meeting was to bring the work of the society more prominently before the public, and consisted chiefly in giving a history of its past workings and results. The meeting was opened by the reading of the latter part of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel and appropriate prayer. A choir of seventy singers, organized for the purpose of assisting in the religious exercises for prisoners, rendered charming and soul inspiring music. The meeting was addressed by Revs. Love, Wayland Hoyt, D. D., and other speakers whose names I cannot now recall. Mr. Love, in speaking of the progress that had been made by the society, in bringing about a more humane and better treatment of criminals, said, "That all prison discipline should tend towards the reformation of the criminal." The old methods of torture by mechanical appliances, and incarceration in damp, dark, and loathsome dungeons, he denounced as inhuman, and false in principle. He spoke of the eastern penitentiary of Pennsylvania as the modern prison. In it the cells are clean and healthful. The prisoners are paid for work done over and above the allowance required by the authorities, which is an incentive to industry and economy. Many prisoners had, in this way, saved enough money by the expiration of their term of service, to enable them to start in business; while some contributed to the support of wife, children or parents during their imprisonment. Another improvement was, to keep the prisoners in solitary confinement; by which is meant that prisoners are kept so as to prevent intercourse and acquaintanceship with one another, associating the worst, with the bad and the better, making them all alike very bad. The association of the prisoners of all grades, under a less enlightened system, made penal institutions schools of vice and crime, rather than reformatory schools. Under the improved system, the prisoners are visited in their cells by members of this aid society, and perhaps others, whose only motive is to lead them to a better life, and bring about their conversion. Another advantage of this solitary confinement is, that when the prisoner is released he can enter upon an honest pursuit with being known as a released convict. The speaker explained that scarcely anyone give employment to ex-convicts, knowing that the prisoner himself is aware of this pre-existing against him, and it is discouraging him to make the attempt at reformation, when he is aware that his imprisonment is only known to those who are enlisted in welfare, and who will not advertise his past life to his hurt, he is encouraged to devote his energies towards living an honorable life. Several incidents were related where ex-convicts were known to be engaged in legitimate business, while their prison experience was entirely unknown to their associates.

One of the offices of the society is to discover false imprisonments. Hundreds of cases of this kind have been discovered by the society, and the release of the innocent victims brought about. An interesting case of the false imprisonment of a little boy, I will here relate. The little boy had saved pennies with which he bought a rooster. On his way home the object of his boyish admiration accidentally escaped, and the boy, after chasing him through street and alley, finally captured him in a dooryard near by which a policeman was doing duty. The brave and watchful sentinel got boy, fowl and dooryard mixed in such a way as to present to his mind a clear case of fowl abstraction, and daylight dooryard robbery. Acting upon his convictions he liberated the fowl and imprisoned the boy in a distant police station. Subsequently the policeman's testimony was sufficient to secure the boy's conviction, before a judge in whom wisdom had degenerated since the days of Solomon, and the boy was sent to Moyamensing for theft. The boy's own version of the affair had failed to gain credence with the policeman and the judge, but not so with the humane agent of the Prisoners Aid Society, who finding the boy in prison investigated his case and had him released. I have no doubt in my mind that, no matter what the boy may think of vigilant policemen, and sedate judges as necessary factors in the body politics, for the protection of citizens and their rights, the boy's version with him, concerning the case, was the truth in that direction, of the Society.

ed, and not until then. At present prisoners who are thoroughly reformed and capable of being useful citizens, may remain legally incarcerated for years, while others, in whom no reformation has taken place, are released, to prey on society, because their term has expired.

My interest in the work of this society was no doubt intensified by what I had seen the day previous in the Anatomical Museum, on Chestnut St., where I saw on exhibition various means of torture employed by former generations to punish criminals and heretics (?) These implements of torture are there represented by attachment to human figures in wax, executed by master artists, who have succeeded in portraying the most intense agony on the features of the unfortunate victims. No humanitarian can behold these illustrations without a shudder, and certainly none but the veriest monster of cruelty could ever have devised and executed such sentences. The humane work of the society contrasted very favorably with these relics of past barbarism; and yet there are some who never speak, save when they speak as the raven speaks—croak—who insist that the world is not growing better, but worse. Such would change their views by a more extended knowledge. There has been progress, and such progress that is apparent in all departments, and among all classes. The mission of Christ in the world is bearing its fruits. The world is slowly but surely advancing towards the perfect ideal represented by the character and teaching of him, who taught the universal brotherhood of man, and that the highest duty of man to man is to love one another.

The chaplain of the eastern penitentiary gave an account of the success achieved in preaching the gospel to the prisoners. As a remarkable circumstance and one by which Christian workers outside of prisons, may profit, he made the statement that the prisoners took but little interest in the preaching until an organ and singing was introduced in connection with the preaching, since when the work has changed. Now the prisoners eagerly wait until Sunday comes. The born strains find responsive echoes in the heart, but not totally depraved heart criminal and elevates his soul to God again, and he becomes a converted

Mr. Cassell gave me a detailed account of his work with the prisoners in their cells and conversation with them, and I was made that his work was the work of the Lord, and that a promise of well done is his and all those who are engaged in this work.

AND SUPPORTED MINISTRY.

BY M. HADY.

At least, it is clear, that the uneducated and unsupported ministry is one of the main causes of division in the German Baptist church. No man can work six days, earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and preach to the up-building of Christ's kingdom. And how can he neglect his every day vocation without receiving a substantial support. Hence, by carrying out their old idea, no time was lost by the majority of ministers in studying God's true way of saving souls, but some peculiar hobby was preached. And not only preached but enforced. In Christ we must all be united, but in our own human ideas we may disagree. Had the ministers in the old Dunkard church preached Christ and Him crucified, there would have been no cause for division, and had they all understood the real import of the religion of Christ, and learned to know that a woman can conform to this sinful world even when she would wear the sanctified bonnet, and that a man can be a follower of Jesus if even he don't live up to some particular hobby not mentioned in the Bible, and that conversion to Christ consists in living according to the gospel, not in dressing like Christ and the apostles, but in living holy like they.

Again, we see at a glance there would be no room for division, for all unite on this that without Christ no man is saved.

Now when we see so much harm resulting from a certain source, who will not endorse the Brethren's idea of having an educated and supported ministry. Brethren will work together for each others' good. The congregation will support the minister with food for the body, while the latter will aid the congregation in receiving food for the inner man. No danger there. Oh, yes, there is danger again. If the minister is a man of God, a true type of the great Shepherd; if he works to the saving of souls, all is well; but if he is "only an hireling," and preaches only for the wool, how then? Simon, the sorcerer, was rebuked by Peter; but with modern hirelings money is all. Simon wanted to purchase a power; Peter's answer was "Thy power is of the Lord, and it shall be taken from thee." Modern hirelings

would say, "Give me thy money and I will give thee all the power in my church thou desirest." Men of money, to-day, all over the land, rule churches. They are virtually bishops over the churches; just because they can pay most to the ministers. "He pays most and should have the most to say." Hence as said, men like Simon, the Sorcerer, rule whole churches to the detriment of the good cause, while of the poor in worldly goods, although their hearts are warm, no account is kept of their best wishes and prayers. Here are two evils. Brethren, guard against them, and rebuild the fractured structure.

Meyersdale, Pa.

A Brethren's Ministerial Convention.

I do not think that it will require a great deal of argument to convince the Brethren generally that it is necessary that we hold a Convention. As soldiers of the Lord we should have a council of war, to formulate a campaign of aggressive warfare against the strongholds of sin. We must devise plans that our limited force and resources can be used to the best advantage, and be of the greatest service to the cause of our great Captain. We have no trouble to "settle," no laws to make, or any particular Scripture to interpret to satisfy an uneasy conscience or prop up a weak and tottering creed, so that the Brethren need not be alarmed or suspicious. Our creed needs no human bracing or repairs. I have no doubt that brother J. W. Beer has already broached this subject, and I merely suggest a time and place. The place should be Dayton, Ohio. The time, the Monday previous to the Conference of the German Baptists, and if there is any need of more than one day's session, we can meet in the evenings so as not to conflict with their meetings. In favor of the forgoing we offer the following reasons: We can obtain the same rates from the different railroad companies as they give the German Baptists, without much trouble. It should be held in or near a large city that those attending may find ample accommodations (by paying for them) without burdening the brethren and sisters of the neighborhood.

As many of the Brethren will have friends and relatives attending the German Baptist Conference they would be glad to meet. They can enjoy their society and still attend the Convention at the same time.

Last, but not least, there are a large number who are already tired of the German Baptist creed, but are still identified with them, that would be glad of an opportunity of meeting with us to see how we transact our church business. They can attend both meetings and decide for themselves. Having our meeting at this time and place will accomplish this.

We come with the Gospel and in the name of the Lord Jesus, and our great object is to save sinners, and not to merely tear the creeds of other denominations to pieces. The sooner the world and the German Baptists know this, the better it will be for them and us.

EDWARD MASON.

From Fairview, Ohio.

On the second of December, 1883, we commenced a meeting at this place which was protracted four weeks. Sometimes the attendance was fair and there seemed to be a good interest, but at other times, on account of the inclemency of the weather and other interferences, the attendance was small and the outlook was discouraging. During the last two weeks brother J. B. Wampler, of Blanco, Pa., was with us and labored faithfully with and for us. Most of this time circumstances were unfavorable, but he continued to preach with his usual logic and energy. The meeting closed on the 30th ult. with a good audience and good impressions. Whilst we did not see the immediate results hoped for, our labors were not in vain, as we had the pleasure of receiving one by baptism, and of knowing that others were awakened to a sense of their condition and duty. We pray and hope that these may, in the near future, give their hearts to the Lord, and present their bodies living sacrifices, "holy and acceptable to God."

On the 31st brother Wampler left us to spend a few weeks in the Brush Creek Church, where we hope his labors may accomplish much good. We hope, too, to see a report from him through the EVANGELIST after he reaches his home. Fraternally,

J. W. BEER.

Washington C. H., O., Jan. 8, '84.

THE BRETHREN'S ANNUAL FOR 1884.

Contains biographical sketches and portraits of Elders John H. Unsted, and Frederick P. Loehr, a chronological department of the Brethren Church and of the German Baptist and Old Order churches, besides much other useful and interesting reading matter. Price 20 cents, or \$2.00 per dozen. Order soon. Address H. R. Holsinger and Co., Ashland, Ohio.

From Johnstown, Pa.

On October 25th, I left home to fill a number of calls, to engage in church work. Arrived in the Schemoca congregation, Jefferson Co., Pa., the 26th, commenced meetings on the evening of the 27th, continued until the evening of the 9th of November, when our labors at this place closed. The Brethren at this place, with our help, called a council of the church which convened Nov. 3rd, when it was decided that they be considered as standing identified with the Brethren Church, as reconstructed at Ashland and Dayton Conventions. The church is unanimous in this. Arrived at Conemaugh in the evening of the 12th. Was met at the station by brother Stephen Hildebrand and brother Jacob Mc Cartney. Spent the night at the house of last named brother. Next day went to Mineral Point, to fill a few appointments that the Brethren had made for us. Had fair congregations. From here went to the Benshoof meeting house; commenced meetings on the evening of November 17, and continued until the evening of the 23, when our meetings closed. Congregation's interest good. Three were added to the church here. From this place we went to the Brethren church in Jackson township. The German Baptists here put themselves upon record for the future by nail-shut doors and windows, and setting a guard to watch, not a sepulcher, but a church house, for fear that the Brethren might assemble peacefully and worship the God of their fathers, as they used to do. The Brethren opened the doors notwithstanding, and without doing violence to the house, but the nail holes still remain! Our meetings here continued until the evening of Dec. 16, when they closed. At this place we had the pleasure of receiving into fellowship twenty-one precious souls, eighteen by baptism and three reclaimed. Meetings closed with a full house and a good interest. From the Jackson church we went to Rosedale, in the Johnstown congregation. Commenced meeting on the evening of December 18, and continued up to January 7, 1884. Had twenty-three additions, twenty-two by baptism and one reclaimed. Place of meeting is near Benshoof's Mills, northwest of Johnstown. During our meetings we had the help of the ministering brethren generally. To brother S. Hildebrand we are specially indebted for his help, as he was with us at about all our meetings, and gave us a helping hand. To God be all the honor and glory. We feel thankful to the brethren and sisters for their kindness shown to us, while with them; as also for their substantial favors. Hope the Lord will still continue his blessings upon them. Our next place of meetings will be, we suppose, Berlin, Pa.

S. W. WILT.

January, 7, '84.

A Question.

Would it or would it not be well for the Brethren to have a Ministerial convention at or near Dayton, O., at or about the time of the next German Baptist Annual Meeting? Let the Brethren everywhere give this matter serious consideration, and may the Lord direct our good and his glory. This time and place are mentioned because of the advantages in fare and, because, no doubt, many of our brethren will feel also to attend the Annual Meeting. We might have a session before Annual Meeting and another afterward. What do you say?

J. H. WORST,

J. W. BEER.

God's Plan of Your Life.

Never complain of your birth, your training, your employment, your hardships; never fancy you could be something if you only had a different lot and sphere assigned you. God understands his own plans, and he knows what you want a great deal better than you do. The very things you most depreciate as fatal limitations or obstructions, are probably God's opportunities; and it is nothing new that the patient should dislike his medicines, or any certain proof that they are poisons. No! a truce to all impatience! Choke that foolish envy which gnaws at you heart because you are not in the same lot with others; bring down your soul, or rather bring it up to receive God's will and do his work in your lot, in your sphere, under your cloud of obscurity, against your temptations; and then you shall find that your condition is never opposed to your good, but really consistent with it.

How a Woman's Life was Saved.

After she had tested the skill of all the best doctors in Western Pennsylvania and New York, and had paid over \$1,000 without receiving any permanent good, the limbs became affected with even ten-fold greater violence, not only eating away the flesh, but attacking the bones beneath. It also affected her head and face, making her almost blind and deaf, reduced to a mere skeleton, weighing but 80 pounds, the doctors pronounced her at death's door. Peruna was then given her, as stated, and with the result given on page 26 in Dr. Hartman's "Ills of Life." She took no other medicine and is perfectly well.